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QUARTERLY JOURNAL

OF THE

STATISTICAL SOCIETY OF LONDON.

OCTOBER, 1840.

Tenth Meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science. September, 1840.

THE Tenth Meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, was held at Glasgow during the week commencing on Thursday the 17th, and terminating on Wednesday the 24th September.

The Statistical Section had the following gentlemen for its officers and committee:—

President.—Viscount Sandon, M.P., Pres. S. S. of London, &c.

Vice-Presidents.—Sheriff Alison, Rev. T. Chalmers, D.D.; Lieut-Colonel Sykes, F.R.S., Vice-Pres. S. S.

Secretaries.—Professor Ramsay, C. R. Baird, Esq., Rawson W. Rawson, Esq., F.S.S.

Committee.—The Lord Provost of Glasgow; Professor Adrian of Giessen; W. P. Alison, M.D.; John Alston, Esq.; Edwin Chadwick, Esq., F.S.S.; James Cleland, LL D; J. C. Colquhoun, Esq., M.P., F.S.S.; Professor R. Cowan, M.D.; William Felkin, Esq., F.S.S.; Allan Fullerton, Esq.; Richard Griffith, Esq., F.S.S.; Webb Hall, Esq.; James Heywood, Esq., F.R.S., F.S.S.; John Houldsworth, Esq.; Right Hon. Sir Alex. Johnston; George Kenrick, Esq.; John Leadbetter, Esq.; Sir Francis Mackenzie, Bart.; Sir John McNeil, G.C B.; R. J. Murchison, Esq., F.R.S., F.S.S., &c.; Marquis of Northampton, Pres. R.S.; W. C. Taylor, LL.D.; R. Wallace, Esq., F.S.S.; R. Wallace, of Kellie, M.P.; J. Wilson, Esq. of Thornlie.

The following papers were read before the Section:—

Thursday, 17*th Sept.*

1. On the State of Crime in Glasgow, by Captain Miller, Superintendent of Police.
2. A General View of the Population, Trade, and Commerce of Glasgow, by James Cleland, LL.D.
3. On the Progress of the Glasgow Asylum for the Blind, by John Alston, Esq.

Friday, 18*th Sept.*

1. On the Application of Statistics to Moral and Economical Questions, by Rev. T. Chalmers, D.D.
2. Illustrations of the Practical Operations of the Scottish System of Managing the Poor, by W. P. Alison, M.D. (See page 211.)

Saturday, 19*th Sept.*

1. On the Vital Statistics of Glasgow compared with Edinburgh, Leith, &c., by Alex. Watt, Esq.
2. On the Bill Circulation of Great Britain and Ireland, by A. Leatham, Esq.
3. On the Excess of Population in the Highlands of Scotland, and on Emigration as a Remedy, by Dr. Alcorn.

Monday, 21*st Sept.*

1. Conclusion of Dr. Alison's Paper, commenced on Friday.

2. Vital Statistics of Glasgow, illustrating the Sanatory State of the Population, by Professor R. Cowan, M.D. (See p. 257).
3. On the State of Education and Crime in England, &c., contrasting the Counties of England with each other, by Mr. Joseph Bentley.

Tuesday, 22nd Sept.

1. Professor Johnston reported the progress of the Committee appointed to inquire into the Statistics of the Coal Fields of the North of England.
2. Mr. Boyce of Belfast reported the Progress of the Statistical Society of Ulster in its inquiries into Education and the Linen Trade of Ireland.
3. On the Mont de Piété System of Pawnbroking in Ireland, by H. J. Porter, Esq. (See p. 293).
4. An Account of the Principal Libraries in Germany, by Professor Adrian, of Giessen.
5. Dr. Chalmers gave the Results of his Experience with regard to the Pauperism of Glasgow.

Wednesday, 23rd Sept.

1. A Comparative Statement of Crime in London, Dublin, Liverpool, and Glasgow, by Captain Miller, Superintendent of Police. (Prepared at the request of the Section).
2. Report on the State of Crime in the Suburban Districts of Glasgow, by Mr. A. Rutherglen. (Prepared at the request of the Section.)
3. Comparative View of the Population of Scotland, by John Wilson, Esq. of Thornlie.
4. Report on the State of Education in Hull, by the Manchester Statistical Society.
5. A lengthened discussion took place on the Papers of Dr. Chalmers and Dr. Alison, read on previous days.

The sittings of the Section terminated on Wednesday, but as two papers remained to be read, besides three or four others which were withdrawn on account of there not being time to read them; and as several Gentlemen who had attended the Section wished to hear some further explanation of Mr. Porter's System of the Monts de Piété in Ireland, and of the views of Dr. Chalmers and Dr. Alison on the subject of Pauperism in Scotland, a meeting took place on the following day in the Hall of the College. Mr. James Heywood. F.S.S., was called to the Chair, and the following business was transacted.

1. A Paper was read by the Rev. P. Chalmers, on the Statistics of the Population and Agriculture of Dunfermline.
2. A Paper on the Statistics of the Glasgow Normal School, was read by Mr. Leadbetter.
3. Mr. Porter gave some explanations respecting the Mont de Piété System of Pawnbroking in Ireland.
4. A further discussion on Pauperism in Scotland took place, in which Dr. Chalmers, Dr. Alison, and others joined.

It will be observed that the anticipations expressed in the Report upon the previous meeting of the British Association,* that preparations would be made to lay some branches of the local statistics of Glasgow before the Section, have been realised. The valuable papers upon the Vital and Criminal Statistics of the city are not only of high interest, but are likely to prove instrumental in awakening the attention of the authorities and of the citizens to the evils which they disclose. Mr. Porter's paper on Pawnbroking has also given rise to a public meeting, and to the nomination of a committee, for the purpose of establishing a Mont de Piété at Glasgow; nor would it be proper to omit notice of the papers upon the important subject of Pauperism in Scotland, which

* Vol. ii. p. 290.

afforded Dr. Chalmers and Dr. Alison, the two rival authorities upon this question, an opportunity of bringing forward the facts upon which their opinions are founded.

A resolution was passed by the Committee of the Section, recommending that the Council of the Association should take steps to urge upon the Government the expediency of extending the system of registration of births, deaths, and marriages, now operating in England, to Scotland;* and the following grants of money were recommended by the committee, and sanctioned by the General Committee.

1. 100*l.* for continuing inquiries into the actual state of Schools in England Committed to Sir C. Lemon, Bart., M.P., Lieut.-Col. Sykes, H. Hallam, G. R. Porter, and J. Heywood, Esqrs.
2. 100*l.* for the purpose of inquiring into Vital Statistics. To Lieut.-Col. Sykes, Drs. W. P. Alison and R. Cowan, G. R. Porter, J. Heywood, E. Chadwick, and A. Watt, Esqrs.
3. 25*l.* for continuing inquiries into the Mining Statistics of the British Coal Fields. To Professor Johnston, H. T. De la Beche, W. L. Wharton, T. Wilson, J. Heywood, D. Milne, C. R. Baird, and T. Edington, jun., Esqrs.

The next meeting of the Association will be held at Devonport, but the day is not yet fixed.

Illustrations of the Practical Operation of the Scottish System of Management of the Poor. By W. P. Alison, M.D., Professor of the Institutes of Medicine in the University of Edinburgh.

[*Read before the Statistical Section of the British Association, on 18th September,* 1840.]

In laying some statements on this subject before this Section of the Association, I am perfectly aware that this is not the tribunal by which the question either of the religious obligation, of the humanity, or the policy, of a uniform and fixed provision for the poor is to be tried. I am well aware of the restrictions which have been wisely imposed on the discussion of any such questions here; and it is only in so far as I shall have it in my power to lay numerical statements before this meeting, illustrating the efficacy or inefficacy of the system now in force in Scotland regarding the management of the poor, that the subject can be properly brought under the view of the Section.

I may state it, however, as a matter of fact, that the Scotch Law on this subject differs from the English, and from the laws of the greater part of Europe, chiefly and most essentially in this, that it is a law continually and avowedly neglected or disobeyed; whereas in these other countries, the law on the subject is practically and uniformly enforced. The Statute Law of Scotland *requires* the heritors, ministers, and elders of parishes, and the magistrates of burghs, to make provision for the "needful sustentation of *all aged poor and impotent persons*, to enable them to live unbeggared," and "to tax and stent the inhabitants" when necessary, for this purpose; but I need hardly say, that in practice this law is not strictly executed in any parish in Scotland; that in many hardly any attempt is made to execute it, and that the practice under it is exceedingly irregular, and bears no fixed relation either to the number or the degree of destitution of the poor; the sums applied in the

* A copy of this will be given in the next Number.